

The forbearance request 04-405 submitted by the Regional Bell companies (RBOCs) to the FCC, if granted, will be a setback to this nation's economy, security and technology innovativeness.

We have been providing Internet services for 10 years in the rural communities. We have been innovative in technology deployments and focused on communities that have been ignored by the former Regional Bell companies.

In our 10 years, we have seen small businesses flourish and jobs added to the local employment base because of the access of technology services we have offered in rural markets.

Our deployment of Wireless Internet access dates back to 1997 for the local public library, which without our community would have been technology obsolete.

We are one of the top employers in our area and in the top 5 technology employers in our rural community. If endorsements of RBOC monopolistic and predatory practices are allowed through the approval of the forbearance, we see the probability of going out of business and our employees will lose their jobs -- and a technology employer will be lost in our community. Good paying jobs gone, the income tax base diminished.

Since deregulation of the telecommunications industry, the creation of healthy competition has led our nation down a path of innovativeness by small companies like ours. At a time where more demand for innovative broadband solutions is needed, allowing forbearance will kill the small business entrepreneur who will lead again with solutions.

I ask the reader, recall the promises of the approved AOL/Time Warner merger? Reading the Wall Street headlines over the past couple of years, one can quickly realize that one thing that comes from larger companies is a less nimble organization. By allowing forbearance, the creation of a less nimble large telecommunications providers will result. Although the short sided gain will be for the companies share-holders, the long term impacts will be detrimental to our nation -- fewer choices means providers will have less of a need to offer selections. Then the rules of supply/demand take precedence -- the less the supply the higher the demand and the higher the prices paid by our nations consumers.

Open access and competition is the basis for our telecommunications freedom and our nations prosperity and security. Endorsement of forbearance and the deregulation of broadband services over 200kbps will lead to monopolistic practices that will be an unrecoverable setback for our beloved country.

Thank you for investing your time reading this.

Sincerely,
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